

**Environmental Assessment #OR135-OR-EA-07
For Land Acquisition of the Hall Property
In Lincoln County**

Prepared by:

Bureau of Land Management
Spokane District, Border Resource Area
September 2003

**Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
For Acquisition of Hall Property in Lincoln County**

Decision

As a result of the assessment of the impacts associated with land acquisition WAOR 59368, it is my decision to select and implement Alternative 1 (Proposed Action-Acquisition of Hall Property) as described in the attached environmental assessment #OR135-03-EA-07. This decision is to acquire, by fee title, about 7,173 acres in Lincoln County.

Rationale

The rationale for the decision to complete the acquisition is consistent with Federal Statutes and regional land use planning. Under the authority of Section 205 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, completing the acquisition was found to be in the public interest. The resulting land tenure adjustment would contribute to more efficient Federal land management, protect and preserve larger areas of contiguous native shrub-steppe habitat for sensitive plant and animal species, and provide the public with greater access and recreational opportunities in the region.

The preferred alternative was selected because it is most consistent with the Bureau's policies of multiple-use, Federal statutes and regulation, and the Spokane District Resource Management Plan. This alternative provides the opportunity for consolidating public ownership, promoting efficient natural resource management, acquiring important wildlife habitat (primarily shrub-steppe), and enhancing public access and recreation in an area experiencing increasing population growth. The No Action Alternative was not chosen, because it would preclude from public ownership the acquisition of benefits associated with the property.

Finding of No Significant Impact

On the basis of the information in the attached environmental assessment and other available information, it is my determination that the selected alternative (Alternative 1-Proposed Action) does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment (A Finding of No Significant Impact). Therefore, this action does not require the preparation of an environmental impact statement.

/s/ K. R. Devitt

Kevin R. Devitt
Field Manager, Border Resource Area

9/25/2003

Date

Environmental Assessment #OR135-03-EA-07 for Land Acquisition of the Hall Property and Tenure Adjustment

Introduction and Background

The Bureau of Land Management is considering an offer to purchase fee title to private land totaling approximately 7,173 acres in Lincoln County, in eastern Washington state (see legal descriptions in Appendix A and Maps 1 and 2 in Appendix B). The property is about 12 miles west of the community of Davenport. Herein the parcel is often referred to as the Hall Property.

The property has been grazed for 130 years. Most of the parcel has been under the ownership of the Blake Hall family for decades.

Need for the Proposed Action

This property was originally included in the Columbia Basin Shrub-Steppe Land Exchange proposal and included in the list of lands for potential acquisition identified in the Notice of Exchange Proposal (NOEP). The NOEP was published in a legal notice in the *Spokesman Review* newspaper, once a week for four consecutive weeks, with the first notice dated June 14, 2002. Due to the current availability of this parcel and changed circumstances of the property owner, the parcel is being processed in a separate action for fee title acquisition rather than exchange.

Pursuing this acquisition meets goals of the Spokane District's realty/land tenure program, to have larger blocks of public land within the management areas. Large blocks of land such as the Hall property support wildlife habitat needs in the region, in particular the shrub-steppe habitat. The size of the Hall property also complements the recreational program. In eastern Washington, there are few large blocks of public land available for the general public's outdoor recreational pursuits. This is an important consideration, in view of the increasing population of major communities in eastern Washington.

Conformance With Land Use Plans

Acquisition of the 7,000+ acre parcel is in conformance with the Spokane BLM District Resource Management Plan Amendment (June 1992), page 13, which among other things provides for acquiring lands that have "public resource values that would benefit and enhance" various resource values, including range management, wildlife habitat, and recreation. In addition, the multiple-use management direction proposed for the parcel after its acquisition also conforms to the Spokane BLM District RMP.

Alternatives

Alternative 1 - Proposed Action (Acquisition of Hall Property)

The Proposed Action is to acquire fee title to the 7,173 acres identified by legal description in Appendix 1 and as shown on Maps 1 and 2 in Appendix 2. This alternative would be subject to the General Management Actions listed within this environmental assessment.

Alternative 2 – No Action/No Acquisition

The parcel would not be acquired.

General Management Actions Applicable to Alternative 1

General

- The BLM would manage the acquired land according to applicable federal laws and regulations, including the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended; the Federal Land Management and Policy Act (FLMPA) of 1976; and the Spokane Resource Management Plan, Record of Decision (1987), as amended in 1992. The acquired lands would be managed for multiple uses, pursuant to management guidance in the Spokane RMP, including management for cultural and Native American resources, wildlife habitat, recreation, forest products, and livestock grazing.
- Any unique or fragile resource values on acquired lands will be protected and managed on an interim basis until completion of the next RMP revision.

Soil, Air, Water, and Vegetation

- Project-level inventory, evaluation, and planning for soil, water, air and vegetation resources will be conducted as site-specific projects are proposed on the acquired parcel. Soils will be managed to maintain productivity and minimize erosion. Corrective actions will be taken, where practicable, to reduce accelerated erosion. Air and water quality will be protected. Shrub-steppe and native vegetation will be monitored and provided protection in activity planning.
- Management actions will include measures to protect or restore natural functioning condition in accordance with Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 and the Oregon-Washington Riparian Enhancement Plan (1987). The general goal will be to maintain, restore, or improve riparian areas to achieve a healthy and productive ecological condition for maximum long-term multiple-use benefits and values.
- Noxious/invasive weeds inventoried on acquired lands could be treated or controlled using chemical or biological methods, as needed and according to the Final EIS for Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States (July 1991) and the Spokane District Noxious Weed Control Environmental Assessment, and any subsequent updates, revisions, or replacements to either of these documents. Weed management could include planting and seeding of native species, adjustments in grazing plans, and coordination with both county and state agencies, and adjacent landowners to control weed populations in support of healthy ecosystems.
- The BLM will review and comply with the Conservation Agreement between BLM and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1995) concerning Washington polemonium. This agreement states that public land on which this species is present will be managed to conserve the species and avoid any actions that might lead to the need for it to be listed under the ESA.

Livestock Grazing Management and Rangeland Improvements

- Grazing may be authorized on an interim basis, pending completion of an allotment management plan and environmental assessment addressing grazing on the acquired lands. Any grazing authorization will be subject to an overview onsite evaluation to set temporary

use parameters. The grazing authorizations will be issued according to guidance in the Spokane RMP and BLM regulations, including the *Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health for Oregon and Washington* (August 12, 1997). Interim grazing authorizations will be approved subject to future development of an Allotment Management Plan, which will entail analyzing current conditions and tailoring grazing regimes to maintain or enhance rangeland conditions on the allotment.

- New grazing allotments will be placed in management categories based on present resource conditions, potential for BLM management actions to change conditions, and land ownership pattern. The management categories are Improve (I), Maintain (M), or Custodial (C).
- If it is necessary to make progress towards meeting BLM Range Health Standards and Guidelines, grazing seasons and levels of use could be adjusted or other changes could be made to the grazing plans.
- Lands authorized for grazing will have a rest-rotation grazing plan implemented whenever possible. Rest rotation grazing plans will not allow more than 50 percent use during the growing season, or more than 60 percent use during the dormant season. Pastures will be rested at least one-half the growing season each year, or rested at least two out of three years during the critical growth period, and totally deferred during the grazing season at least one out of three years.
- Rangeland improvements could be developed or modified, subject to consistency with BLM objectives, site-specific environmental analysis, and BLM approval.

Energy and Mineral Resources

- The acquired federal mineral estate may be open to energy and mineral leasing, subject to all laws, rules, and regulations applicable thereto.
- The acquired mineral estate will not be open to locatable minerals, because regulations for acquired lands have not been developed.

Cultural, Archaeological, and Paleontological Resources

- Reasonable effort will be made to identify, record, and evaluate historical, cultural and paleontological resources.
- Before any proposed activities are implemented on the acquired lands, an inventory and/or assessment will be conducted to identify related impacts on cultural and paleontological resources in accordance with applicable laws, including Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act 1966, as amended.

Recreation/Access

- The acquired parcel would be available for dispersed, non-motorized recreational activities, subject to legal access, District management policy and guidance, applicable state regulations, and the need for resource protection.

- For existing roads on acquired lands, the BLM will assign designated use of “Closed.” This is based on resource reviews that consider providing public access while protecting important resource values. This designation is in accordance with the National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands (January 2001). The designation of “Closed” means that areas closed to all vehicular use, except administrative vehicles, to protect resources, ensure visitor safety, reduce use conflicts, and protect adjacent private lands.
- Activities such as hunting will be deferred at least until 2004 to allow time for placement of recreational improvements (signing) to protect adjacent private lands, structures, and wildlife/vegetation values.
- Recreation improvements, such as kiosk/sign installation and parking area construction, may be necessary at key entry points to the acquired parcel to protect natural resources and enhance the public use of the area.

Hazardous Materials

- Potential environmental issues or liabilities will be identified and addressed prior to acquisition.

Socioeconomic

- The acquired parcel will be available for multiple uses (including grazing and dispersed recreational activities) that provide economic support to local communities and the region, while adhering to RMP management guidance for the Upper Crab Creek Management Area and specific resource values.

Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

The following section describes the potentially affected environment by resource values and the potential impacts that could occur from the alternatives. The text focuses on resource values that have potential for significant impacts. Since the property has been in private ownership, the affected environment information is the best available data, collected by resource specialists during field visits to assess the value of the property for public benefit.

Vegetation, Including Special Status Species: Overall, the Hall property is in excellent ecological condition, with much of it having high quality sagebrush-steppe vegetation and very few weeds. Some forested/shrub area exists on about 150 acres of the Hall property, specifically in the northern portions of Sections 26 and 27, and the southern portion of Section 23. These forested areas primarily consist of scattered small patches of unmerchantable-size ponderosa pine on steep slopes.

The Washington Natural Heritage Program ranks ecosystem elements (community types) on the bases of rarity, degree of threat, and adequacy of representation in Natural Area Preserves within the state, with Priority 1 being the most critical types. In the 2001 Washington Natural Heritage Plan produced by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Ponderosa pine/bluebunch wheatgrass is a Priority 1 ecosystem. The Hall piece has patches of this Ponderosa pine/bluebunch wheatgrass Priority 1 ecosystem in Sections 23 and 15.

A survey by BLM botanists for the presence of federal and state listed Special Status Species plants shows that the Hall parcel has potential habitat for one federally Threatened plant-- Spalding's catchfly. The wetlands also are potential habitat for the federally Threatened plant water howellia, but the area has not been surveyed in the appropriate season to identify this plant in this area.

Potential Impacts on Vegetation: Continuation of domestic grazing would impact vegetation in a similar manner as in the past. There could be less impact to vegetation than historically, when considering the BLM would have flexibility to adjust the grazing regime based on monitoring vegetative conditions on the parcel. Fences within the parcel would facilitate pasture rotation, relieving grazing pressure.

Some of the vegetation on the Hall property meets criteria for Priority 1 ecosystem. Having this ecosystem in the public land base will help in its conservation efforts.

Neither Spalding's catchfly or howellia is expected to be significantly impacted by federal acquisition and subsequent management. Careful grazing management should provide adequate protection for these two plant species, if any occur on lands subject to grazing. Also, site-specific inventory and assessment, which would be done prior to implementing specific activities within the parcel, is expected to provide further protection to special status plants that may occur.

Water Resources/Riparian/Wetlands: There is approximately 1 mile of permanent stream habitat (Hawk Creek), approximately 5 miles of seasonal/intermittent stream habitat (Lake Creek tributaries), and approximately 170 acres of wetland habitat (Hurley Lake and seasonal ponds/wetlands) within this shrub-steppe area that are available for wildlife species use. All of the riparian/wetland habitat was generally found to be in good condition during 2000 surveys with few non-native plants present.

Potential Impacts on Water Resources/Riparian Areas/Wetlands: Acquisition of the Hall property (Alternative 1) would result in a net increase of approximately 1 mile of permanent stream habitat (lotic shrub-steppe), 5 miles of seasonal/intermittent stream habitat, and 170 acres of wetland habitat. Under BLM management, livestock grazing and other uses along the streams, riparian areas, and wetlands would be subject to monitoring and changed levels or types of uses, if needed, to maintain or enhance their condition.

Under Alternative 2 (No Action/No Acquisition), the opportunity to bring the above identified streams and wetlands into public ownership would be foregone and the resources would be subject to private land management practices.

Wildlife/Fisheries Habitat, Including Special Status Species: There are approximately 7,023 acres of shrub-steppe wildlife habitat and approximately 150 acres of forested/shrub wildlife habitat within the proposed acquisition area. The entire area is within the shrub-steppe zone of Washington State, containing suitable habitat to support a wide diversity of shrub-dependant wildlife species. Ponderosa pine dominates the interspersed forested/shrub habitat, which are generally zones of high reptile and bird diversity. The stands of aspen found throughout the woodlands, especially around permanent and seasonal wetlands, provide important wildlife habitat. The streams, riparian areas, and wetlands described in the "Water Resources/Riparian

Areas/Wetlands” section of this environmental assessment also provide important habitat to various wildlife species.

Shrub-steppe nesting habitat is an important feature to many Bureau special status species. There are 105 acres of cliff and talus habitat, primarily around wetlands. The cliffs were overall approximately 50 feet high and approximately 100 feet long. Some small crevices and cracks were present and may provide habitat for species such as bats. No raptor nests were detected during surveys, although suitable nesting habitat is present.

The proposed acquisition area contains core sharp-tailed grouse habitat (a federal species of concern/state threatened) and historic sage grouse habitat (a federal candidate species/state threatened). There is an historic sharp-tailed lek within the proposed acquisition area, although no recent leks have been observed on the parcel. Other Bureau Special Status Species known to occur within the vicinity (10 miles) of the acquisition area include: bald eagle, peregrine falcon, golden eagle, Townsend’s big-eared bat, white-tailed jackrabbit, gyrfalcon, Swainson’s hawk, and loggerhead shrike. The parcel likely only provides foraging habitat for the bald eagle. Nesting for peregrine falcon is not known to occur on the parcel.

The area contains suitable big game habitat for elk, mule deer and white-tailed deer. There are approximately 1,696 acres of cover habitat and 6,321 acres of forage habitat dispersed throughout the area.

No fishery values have been identified on the Hall property..

Potential Impacts on Wildlife/Fisheries Habitat: Overall, under Alternative 1 (Proposed Action-Acquisition), there would be a gain in shrub-steppe, forested/shrub habitat, cliff/talus habitat, and riparian/wetland habitat. Acquiring this habitat would allow BLM to manage large contiguous blocks of habitat for a variety of wildlife species, with a specific benefit to those species with a larger home range and/or space requirements and species whose habitats are currently declining, both in quantity and quality in the Columbia Basin. In addition, acquiring this habitat would benefit special status species known to occur in the area, and in particular sharp-tailed grouse.

Alternative 2 (No Action/No Acquisition) would restrict the conservation of shrub-steppe habitat. The opportunity to consolidate and conserve additional wildlife habitat and substantially increase management efficiency and associated public benefits would be foregone.

Geology and Soil Resources: *Geology:* Late Miocene and early Pliocene basalt flows and younger sediments filled the Columbia Basin. Generally horizontal basalt sequences exceed 2,300 to 3,200 feet thick in this area and are up to 10,000 feet thick further to the southwest. Surficial geology in the vicinity of the Hall property has been significantly impacted by large-scale Holocene glacial flooding, resulting in what is termed the “*Channeled Scablands*.”

Soils: Soils on the Hall parcel are of the Anders–Bakeoven–Rock outcrop type. These soils occur on nearly level to moderately steep, moderately deep and very shallow soils in 12 to 16 inch precipitation zone, and rock outcrop. These soil associations exhibit slow to rapid surface runoff and slight to high erosion hazard. The main limitations of these soils for rangeland use are shallowness to basalt, which limits its available water capacity and rocky/stony surface layer, which interferes with farm/ranch machinery use.

Potential Impacts on Soils: Acquisition of the Hall property (Alternative 1 – Proposed Action), could, in the long term, result in soil compaction in some areas experiencing high recreational use. For the most part, however, projected recreational use is expected to be dispersed and therefore would incur minimal soil compaction. Also, existing fencing would curtail recreational uses to non-motorized in most areas. Those areas where vehicles park would likely incur greater compaction. Site-specific impacts, including those on soils, would be addressed in site-specific environmental assessments and mitigated where possible.

Under Alternative 2 (No Action/No Acquisition), soils could be impacted by actions of the private landowner. Soil compaction could be less, since the property would not be legally accessible by the general public.

Energy and Mineral Resources: Leasable Minerals: Based on sedimentary deposits thought to exist below the Columbia River Basin basalts, the Hall property may have low to moderate potential for oil and gas deposits at depth.

Locatable Minerals: The Hall property has potential for small locatable mineral deposits associated with sedimentary rocks, and igneous intrusive and extrusive rocks, no outcrops of these rocks were observed during onsite property inspection. These rocks and associated mineral deposits may exist at depth, but economic occurrences of these minerals are highly unlikely to be present in this area.

Salable Materials: Because of its proximity to past and present rivers, streams, and past flood deposits in the Columbia River Basin, the Hall property likely contains deposits of salable materials such as sand and gravel. Remote location could probably render these deposits uneconomical.

Potential Impacts on Energy & Mineral Resources: Under Alternative 1 (Proposed Action), acquisition of the Hall parcel would result in availability of the leasable energy and the leasable and salable mineral resources for future development, contingent on their likely value for such. Considering the likelihood and location of leasable energy and mineral resources, development is not expected to occur on this parcel. However, some leasable materials (sand and gravel) could be processed. Under Alternative 2 (No Action/No Acquisition), all of the energy and mineral resources would remain in private ownership.

Recreation: The Hall property is within the Channeled Scablands region of Eastern Washington, home to geologic features not found anywhere else in the world. The parcel is also in close proximity to large tracts of BLM-managed lands within the Channeled Scabland region.

In private ownership, recreational use of the parcel has been limited and mainly consists of deer and upland bird hunting by the landowner and persons authorized by the landowner.

The recreational activities for similar lands include hiking, camping, hunting, horseback riding, mountain biking, nature study, and wildlife viewing. Correlations can be made between recreational activities and populated communities. As the population of an area increases, so does the need for outdoor recreational pursuits. Although Lincoln County where the Hall property is situated has shown a slight decrease in population over the last few years, several

populated areas in the surrounding vicinity are experiencing increases in population (see table below). This increase in population in the surrounding areas is an indicator of a need for open space for recreational activities. These large tracts of land are increasingly popular with visitors, because they offer many dispersed recreation opportunities and are located within a two-hour drive of Spokane. Other public lands in the vicinity had more than 10,000 visitors in FY02.

Population of Selected Geographic Areas of Washington State, 2000-2002					
Geographic Area	Population Percent Change April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2002	Census 2000	Population Estimates		
		April 1, 2000	July 1, 2000	July 1, 2001	July 1, 2002
Washington State	2.88%	5,894,121	5,911,803	5,993,390	6,068,996
Lincoln County	-0.87%	10,184	10,184	10,141	10,096
Kennewick City	5.62%	54,693	55,477	56,435	57,949
Moses Lake City	6.40%	14,953	15,331	15,621	15,976
Pasco City	9.47%	32,066	32,970	33,886	35,420
Richland City	6.72%	38,708	38,922	39,763	41,496
Spokane City	0.34%	195,629	195,493	195,308	196,305
Population Figures 2000 - 2002 by U.S. Census American Factfinder State & City - Source: http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GCTTable County Source: http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GCT					

Legal access to the Hall property is provided by public roads, including State Highway 2 and Telford County Road.

Potential Impacts on Recreation: Acquisition of this large tract of land (Alternative 1-Proposed Action) could result in increased recreational use due to its legal and easy access off Highway 2 and Telford Road, as well as its close proximity to other BLM-managed lands. Its acquisition would increase opportunities for the general public to participate in dispersed uses, including camping, hunting, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, nature study (such as wildflower and wildlife viewing), and environmental education. Having this large block of land available for recreational opportunities is especially important given the increasing populations of surrounding cities within a few hours drive (see table above).

Recreational opportunities for the general public could be improved as Federal land ownership is blocked up and legal access via existing public roads touching or crossing the parcels is made possible. The Channeled Scablands region offers visitors a unique backcountry experience through sun-drenched sagebrush country. In many cases, BLM land serves as open space and provides public access in areas that are predominantly private land.

Under Alternative 2 (No Action/No Acquisition), recreational opportunities on the parcel would be limited to the private landowner and persons authorized by the landowner.

Cultural and Archaeological Resources: A number of historic period properties and other cultural resources would be brought into public ownership with acquisition of the Hall Property (Alternative 1-Proposed Action). Historic period properties include two homestead/farm/ranch properties, the Telford homestead, and the Oligher Ranch, as well as a portion of an historic highway. A site composed of stone walls of unknown age is also located on the parcel.

The remains of the Telford homestead, associated with a long time resident of the region and namesake of the historic Telford townsite, is comprised of an historic foundation and collapsed outbuildings. The Oligher Ranch includes the standing ranch house and outbuildings. A portion of the historic Central Washington Railway grade, owned by the Burlington Northern Railway, bisects the acquisition property. Additional properties associated with the railway may be located along the route.

The acquisition property is located within the traditional use area of members of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and the Spokane Tribe. Traditional Native American subsistence and religious activities, including plant gathering and hunting are among the cultural values tied to the habitats present in this property.

Although specific traditional resource use areas have not been identified on the property, the diverse habitats found in this area are an indicator of culturally important plant and animal resources. Habitats on lands to be acquired include upland plant communities favorable to traditional economic plants, ponderosa pine forest lands, and important summer and winter wildlife habitat. The favorable habitat on this property would permit potential harvest of plant and wildlife species of importance to tribal communities.

Additional inventory of the parcel would likely identify additional cultural resources. No Traditional Cultural Properties or sacred sites have been identified on the property. Acquisition of the parcel would potentially increase the number and types of cultural resources managed, as well as improve access to and conservation of those resources.

Potential Impacts to Cultural and Archaeological and Paleontological Resources: Although cultural sites of historic or cultural value are protected on federal lands, increased recreational use of the area may result in damage or vandalism to cultural properties both within the acquisition property and to the adjacent historic Telford townsite. The Telford townsite, surrounded by the proposed acquisition property, includes the first Grange Hall constructed in Lincoln County and a country school. The site is likely eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and would likely be subject to increased public visitation and vandalism.

Under Alternative 2 (No Action/No Acquisition), the opportunity to bring cultural resources into public ownership would be foregone.

Paleontological Resources: No paleontological resources have been identified on the proposed acquisition parcel.

Hazardous Materials: Inspection of the proposed acquisition parcel identified few potential environmental hazards or hazardous materials. One abandoned farm residence with associated outbuildings is present in Section 15. The potential environmental concerns associated with this former residence include asbestos-containing materials in farm buildings. Based upon previous property uses, it is also possible that there are other small areas of solid waste disposal associated with common agricultural practices.

Potential Impacts Associated With Hazardous Materials: If the Hall property is acquired as proposed in Alternative 1, no significant environmental consequences are expected to result from the potential presence of asbestos-containing material in abandoned farm buildings or small solid

waste disposal areas, if present, on the parcel. Acquisition of the parcel where potential environmental conditions have been observed is likely to involve minor investigation and cleanup actions. No significant impacts to human health or the environment have resulted from recent and historic use of the property. No site-specific impacts have been identified for Alternative 2 (No Action/No Acquisition), where the lands would remain in private ownership.

Socioeconomics: The primary socioeconomic impact would be the change in taxation basis. Under private ownership, the county tax revenue for the subject land is estimated to be about \$1,900 per year, or about \$.025 cents per acre. In public ownership, the land would be subject to Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILT). PILT is a payment made, historically on a yearly basis, by the Bureau of Land Management with Congressionally appropriated funds, to counties to compensate local governments for the presence of federal lands in their jurisdiction that are not subject to local taxes. In 2003, the PILT payment to Lincoln County totaled \$93,830, for 70,650 acres of federal land. Acquisition of the Hall property (Alternative 1-Proposed Action), based on 2003 PILT payment calculations of an estimated payment of \$1.328 per acre, would increase the PILT payment by about \$9,526 to a total of \$103,356. In summary, the receipts to Lincoln County in the form of PILT payments would exceed the amount the county receives under private ownership.

A second socioeconomic impact for Alternative 1 (Proposed Action/Acquisition) is that associated with recreational opportunities. The projected increase in recreational visitation to the region would increase revenue to local economies via spending at local businesses, such as gas stations, restaurants, motels, sporting goods stores, grocery stores, and gift shops. Small communities in Lincoln County and the surrounding area recognize the importance of tourism to their economies.

Grazing also figures into the socioeconomic element, particularly for Alternative 1 (Proposed Action). Continuing to allow grazing on the subject lands would meet a local request for grazing forage. This would provide some economic support directly to the grazing lessee, as well as indirect support to the livestock industry. An unspecified amount of revenue would be generated to the BLM through receipt of grazing fees, which would be calculated at the time a grazing lease is issued. Half of these fees would be paid to Lincoln County, and the other half would be available for grazing improvements.

Under Alternative 2 (No Action/No Acquisition), the Hall property is likely to continue to be used for agriculture purposes, including grazing. There would be no economic support from public recreational uses of the property. The tax revenue to Lincoln County would remain at the current level of about \$1,900 per year.

Other Resource Elements Analyzed

Environmental Justice: No disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations are expected to result from implementation of any of the alternatives addressed in this EA.

Other Critical Elements That Were Considered

- Air quality
- Wild and scenic rivers

- Prime/unique farmlands
- Floodplain
- Special area designations (including Areas of Critical Environmental Concern)
- Wilderness

Air quality would not be affected by either alternative. None of the other critical elements listed above are present on the Hall property, which is the subject of acquisition.

Cumulative Impacts: Selection of Alternative 1 (Proposed Action/Acquisition) would increase the public land acreage under BLM administration in Lincoln County by 7,173 acres, to a total of 65,745 acres. This total equates to approximately 4.5 percent of the county's land base.

Future land tenure adjustments being considered could increase the number of public land acres that BLM-administers in Lincoln County.

The increase in the amount of shrub-steppe habitat enhances the wildlife habitat for shrub-steppe wildlife species and also increases the opportunities for recreational activities.

Coordination/Consultation With Other Agencies, Groups and Individuals

The BLM has coordinated the land acquisition proposal with the landowner, Lincoln County Commissioners, and the Eastern Washington Resource Advisory Council.

As explained on page 2 of this environmental assessment, in the section entitled "Need for the Proposed Action," the Hall parcel was among those parcels identified for potential acquisition in a Notice of Exchange Proposal. That notice was published in a legal notice in the *Spokesman Review* newspaper to provide public notification. The notice has also been posted on the Spokane BLM District website.

Consultation was initiated with the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and the Spokane Tribe on June 21, 2002. All interested parties were requested to provide input to the proposed action and to identify any concerns with the project.

This environmental assessment will be posted on the Spokane BLM Internet website at www.or.blm.gov/spokane. Copies of the EA will also be mailed by request.

**Appendix A – Legal Descriptions of Proposed Acquisition
Of Hall Property in Lincoln County**

Willamette Meridian:

T. 25 N., R. 35 E.,

Section 2, W $\frac{1}{2}$ W $\frac{1}{2}$;

Section 3, All, **excepting** that portion of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ lying South of U.S. Highway No. 2 **and except** that portion thereof conveyed to the State of Washington by deed recorded August 24, 1970 under Auditor's No. 321669;

Section 4, All, **excepting** that portion of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ lying South of U.S. Highway No. 2 **and** that portion of the N $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ lying East of Telford Road (Lincoln Co. Rd. # 50370) **and except** that portion thereof conveyed to the State of Washington by deed recorded August 24, 1970 under Auditor's No. 321669;

Section 5, All that portion of property in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ lying North of the former United States Highway No. 10, and the SE $\frac{1}{4}$;

Sec. 8, E $\frac{1}{2}$;

Sec. 9, All;

Sec. 10, All, **except** U.S. Hwy. No. 2;

Sec. 14, S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$;

Sec. 15, All;

Sec. 22, All;

Sec. 23, All;

T. 26 N., R. 35 E.,

Sec. 23, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$;

Sec. 26, All **except** Telford Road;

Sec. 27, All **except** Telford Road;

Sec. 34, All that portion lying South and East of Lincoln County Road No. 5037 (also known as Telford Road), **except** that portion described as follows:

Beginning at the point of intersection of the North line of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ and the East line of the County Road; thence East a distance of 1155 feet along the North boundary of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$; thence South 1155 feet on a line parallel with the East line of said Quarter Section; thence West on a line parallel to the North line of said Quarter Section to a point of intersection with the easterly boundary of the County Road; thence along the East boundary of said County Road to the point of beginning.

Sec. 35, All **except** Telford Road;

Aggregating **7,173** acres, more or less in Lincoln County, Washington.

Appendix B – Maps of Proposed Acquisition Parcel



